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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re patent application of: ) Attorney Docket No.: F-189  
Robert A. Cordery, et al. ) Group Art Unit: 2731  
Serial No.: ) Examiner: S. Cangialosi  
Filed: ) Date: August 29, 2000  
Title: SECURE USER CERTIFICATE FOR ELECTRONIC COMMERCE  
EMPLOYING VALUE METERING SYSTEM

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

This Preliminary Amendment is being submitted concurrently with a Continued Prosecution Application (CPA) request transmittal. Please amend the above-identified patent application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

✓ Cancel claims 1-34.

Add the following claims:

35.

A method for validating a signed digital message, comprising the steps of:  
providing a register having funds stored therein;  
receiving a signed digital message from a sender;  
determining if sufficient funds are present in the register for validating the  
message;  
deducting funds from the register for validating the message; and  
validating the signed digital message using a public key of the sender.

36. The method of claim 35, comprising the further steps of: